



Every Day Life of Abraham Lincoln

By those who knew him.

..... ILLUSTRATED



bered as the most laughable of farces. Lincoln's favorite newspaper at this time was the Louisville Journal, a paper which he received regularly by mail, and paid for during a number of years when he had not money enough to dress decently. He liked its politics, and was particularly delighted with its wit and humor, of which he had the keenest appreciation."

STUDYING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

When out of the store Lincoln was always busy in the pursuit of knowledge. One gentleman who met him during this period says that the first time he saw him "he was lying on a trundle-bed, covered with books and papers, and rocking a cradle with his foot. Of the amount of uncovered space between the extremities of his trousers and the top of his socks, which this informant observed, there shall be no mention. The whole scene, however, was entirely characteristic,—Lincoln reading and studying, and at the same time helping his landlady by quieting her child." Mr. Lamon says: "Sometimes, when business was not particularly brisk, he would lie under a shade-tree in front of the store and pore over the book; at other times a customer would find him stretched on the counter intently engaged in the same way. But the store was a bad place for study; and he was often seen quietly slipping out of the village, as if he wished to avoid observation, when, if successful in getting off alone, he would spend hours in the woods 'mastering a book,' or in a state of profound abstraction. He kept up his old habit of sitting up late at night; but as lights were as necessary to his purpose as they were expensive, the village cooper permitted him to sit in his shop, where he burnt the shavings, and kept a blazing fire to read by, when every one else was in bed. The Greens lent him books; the schoolmaster gave him instructions in the store, on the road, or in the meadows; every visitor to New Salem who made the least pretension to scholarship was waylaid by Abe and required to explain some-

thing which he could not understand. The result of it all was that the village and the surrounding country wondered at his growth in knowledge, and he soon became as famous for his understanding as for his muscular power and his unfailing humor."

LINCOLN'S FIRST OFFICIAL ACT.

This event happened in the summer of 1831. "On the day of the election, in the month of August," as Minter Graham, the school teacher, tells us, "Abe was seen loitering about the polling place. It must have been but a few days after his arrival in New Salem, for nobody knew that he could write. They were 'short of a clerk' at the polls; and, after casting about in vain for some one competent to fill the office, it occurred to one of the judges that perhaps the tall stranger possessed the needful qualifications. He thereupon accosted him, and asked if he could write. He replied, 'Yes, a little.' 'Will you act as clerk of the election to-day?' said the judge. 'I will try,' returned Abe, 'and do the best I can, if you so request.'" He did try accordingly, and, in the language of the schoolmaster, "performed the duties with great facility, firmness, honesty, and impartiality. I clerked with him," says Mr. Graham, "on the same day and at the same polls. The election books are now in the city of Springfield, where they can be seen and inspected any day."

LINCOLN AS A WRESTLER.—THE "CLARY GROVE BOYS."

At this era, Lincoln was as famous for his skill in athletic sports as he was for his love of books. Mr. Offutt, who had a strong regard for him, according to Mr. Arnold, "often declared that his clerk, or salesman, knew more than any man in the United States, and that he could out-run, whip, or throw any man in the county. These boasts came to the ears of the 'Clary Grove Boys,' a set of rude, roystering, good-natured fellows, who lived in and around Clary's Grove, a settlement near New Salem. Their leader was Jack Armstrong, a great

square-built fellow, strong as an ox, who was believed by his partisans to be able to whip any man on the Sangamon river. The issue was thus made between Lincoln and Armstrong as to which was the better man ; and although Lincoln tried to avoid such contests, nothing but an actual trial could settle the question among their partisans. And so they met and wrestled for some time, without any decided advantage on either side. Finally Jack resorted to some foul play, which roused Lincoln's indignation. Putting forth his whole strength, he seized the great bully by the neck, and holding him at arm's length shook him like a boy. The 'Clary Grove Boys,' who made up most of the crowd of lookers-on, were ready to pitch in on behalf of their companion, and a general onslaught upon Lincoln was threatened. Lincoln backed up against Offutt's store, and was ready, calmly awaiting the attack of the whole crowd. But his cool courage touched the manhood of Jack Armstrong. He stepped forward, seized Lincoln's hand and shook it heartily, as he declared : 'Boys, Abe Lincoln is the best fellow that ever broke into this settlement. He shall be one of us.' From that time on, Jack Armstrong was Lincoln's man and most willing thrall. His hand, his table, his purse, his vote, and that of the 'Clary Grove Boys,' belonged to Lincoln. Lincoln's popularity with them was unbounded, and his rule was just. He would have fair play, and he repressed the violence and brutality of these rough fellows to an extent which would have been impossible to another man. He could stop a fight and quell a riot among these rude neighbors when all others failed."

FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH THRASHINGS.

Under whatever circumstances Lincoln was forced into a fight, the end could be confidently predicted. He was sure to thrash his opponent, and gain his friendship afterwards by a generous use of his victory. Innumerable instances could be cited in proof of the statement. "While showing goods to two or three women in Offutt's store one day, a bully came in

and began to talk in an offensive manner, using much profanity, and evidently wishing to provoke a quarrel. Lincoln leaned over the counter, and begged him, as ladies were present, not to indulge in such talk. The bully retorted that the opportunity had come for which he had long sought, and he would like to see the man who could hinder him from saying anything he might choose to say. Lincoln, still cool, told him that if he would wait until the ladies retired, he would hear what he had to say, and give him any satisfaction he desired. As soon as the women were gone, the man became furious. Lincoln heard his boasts and his abuse for a time, and finding that he was not to be put off without a fight, said : ‘Well, if you must be whipped, I suppose I may as well whip you as any other man.’ This was just what the bully had been seeking, he said ; so out of doors they went. Lincoln made short work of him. He threw him upon the ground, and held him there as if he had been a child, and gathering some ‘smart-weed’ which grew upon the spot, rubbed it into his face and eyes until the fellow bellowed with pain. Lincoln did all this without a particle of anger, and when the job was finished went immediately for water, washed his victim’s face and did everything he could to alleviate his distress. The upshot of the matter was that the man became his life-long friend, and was a better man from that day.’”

LINCOLN AND SMOOT.

The chief repute of a sturdy frontiersman is built upon his deeds of prowess, and the fame of the great, rough, strong-limbed, kind-hearted Titan was spread over all the country around. Says Mr. Lamon : “On one occasion while he was clerking for Offutt, a stranger came into the store, and soon disclosed the fact that his name was Smoot. Abe was behind the counter at the moment ; but hearing the name he sprang over and introduced himself. Abe had often heard of Smoot, and Smoot had often heard of Abe. They had been as anxious to meet as ever two celebrities were ; but hitherto they had

never been able to manage it. ‘Smoot,’ said Lincoln, after a steady survey of his person, ‘I am very much disappointed in you; I expected to see an old Probst of a fellow.’ (Probst, it appears, was the most hideous specimen of humanity in all that country). ‘Yes,’ replied Smoot; ‘and I am equally disappointed, for I expected to see a good-looking man when I saw you.’ A few neat compliments like the foregoing laid the foundation of a lasting intimacy between the two men, and in his present distress Lincoln knew no one who would be more likely than Smoot to respond favorably to an application for money.” “After he was elected to the Legislature,” says Mr. Smoot, “he came to my house one day in company with Hugh Armstrong. Says he, ‘Smoot, did you vote for me?’ I told him I did. ‘Well,’ says he, ‘you must loan me money to buy suitable clothing, for I want to make a decent appearance in the Legislature.’ I then loaned him two hundred dollars, which he returned to me according to promise.”

THE CHAMPION OF GOOSENEST PRAIRIE.

About this period Abraham paid a visit to his father, who, yielding to a fresh vagrant impulse, had transferred his family from Macon to a place near Goosenest Prairie, in Coles county. While there, Abraham had been compelled to try his strength with the “champion” of the region. Mr. Lamon thus describes their meeting: “Scarcely had Abe reached Coles county, when he received a visit from a famous wrestler, one Daniel Needham, who regarded him as a growing rival, and had a fancy to try a fall or two with him. He considered himself the ‘best man’ in the country, and the report of Abe’s achievements filled his big breast with envious pains. His greeting was friendly and hearty, but his challenge was rough and peremptory. Abe valued his popularity among ‘the boys’ too highly to decline it, and met him by public appointment in the ‘greenwood,’ at Wabash Point, where he threw him twice with so much ease that Needham’s pride was more hurt than his body. ‘Lincoln,’ said he, ‘you have thrown me

twice, but you can't whip me.' 'Needham,' replied Abe, 'are you satisfied that I can throw you? If you are not, and must be convinced through a thrashing, I will do that, too, for your sake.' Needham had hoped that the youngster would shrink from a fight with the acknowledged 'bully of the patch;' but finding him willing, and at the same time magnanimously inclined to whip him solely for his own good, he concluded that a bloody nose and a black eye would be the reverse of soothing to his feelings, and therefore surrendered the field with such grace as he could command."

THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN LINCOLN AND RICHARD YATES.

Lincoln's old friend, W. G. Greene, tells us that while he was a student at the Illinois College at Jacksonville, he became acquainted with Richard Yates, also a student. On one occasion, while Yates was a guest of Greene's during a vacation, the latter took him up to Salem to make him acquainted with Lincoln. They found Abe flat on his back on a cellar-door, reading a newspaper. Greene introduced the two, and thus the acquaintance began between the future War-Governor of Illinois and the future President.

LINCOLN UPSETS HIS BREAD AND MILK.

On this same occasion, says Mr. Greene, Lincoln accepted an invitation to go home and take dinner with him and Yates. While they were at the table, Lincoln, in his awkwardness, managed to upset his bowl of bread and milk. Mr. Greene well recollects "the confusion with which the accident covered Mr. Lincoln, which Mrs. Greene, the hostess, who was always attached to the ungainly backwoodsman, tried to relieve as best she could by declaring it was her fault in setting the bowl at the wrong place on the table."

A STORY-TELLER BY NATURE.

Lincoln was from boyhood an adept at expedients for avoiding any unpleasant predicament, and "one of his modes

of getting rid of troublesome friends, as well as troublesome enemies, was by telling a story. He began these tactics early in life, and he grew to be wonderfully adept in them. If a man broached a subject which he did not wish to discuss, he told a story which changed the direction of the conversation. If he was called upon to answer a question, he answered it by telling a story. He had a story for everything ; something had occurred at some place where he used to live that illustrated every possible phase of every possible subject with which he might have connection.” He acquired the habit of story-telling naturally, as we learn from the following statement : “At home, with his step-mother and the children, he was the most agreeable fellow in the world. He was always ready to do everything for everybody. When he was not doing some special act of kindness, he told stories or ‘cracked jokes.’ He was as full of his yarns in Indiana as ever he was in Illinois. Dennis Hanks was a clever hand at the same business, and so was old Tom Lincoln.”

“HONEST ABE.”

It was while Lincoln was salesman for Offutt that he acquired the *sobriquet* of “Honest Abe.” Says Mr. Arnold : “Of many incidents illustrating his integrity, one or two may be mentioned. One evening he found his cash overran a little, and he discovered that in making change for his last customer, an old woman who had come in a little before sun-down, he had made a mistake, not having given her quite enough. Although the amount was small, a few cents, he took the money, immediately walked to her house, and corrected the error. At another time, on his arrival at the store in the morning, he found on the scales a weight which he remembered having used just before closing, but which was not the one he had intended to use. He had sold a parcel of tea, and in the hurry had placed the wrong weight on the scales, so that the purchaser had a few ounces less of tea than had been paid for. He immediately sent the quantity required to

make up the deficiency. These and many similar incidents are told, exhibiting his scrupulous honesty in the most trifling matters ; and for these the people gave him the name which clung to him through life."

The natural integrity of Lincoln's character is brought out in a conversation he once held with a New Salem friend, Mr. William McFeeley, who says : "Lincoln said he did not believe in total depravity, and, although it was not popular to believe it, it was easier to do right than wrong ; that the first thought was, what was right? and the second, what was wrong? Therefore it was easier to do right than wrong, and easier to take care of it, as it would take care of itself. It took an effort to do wrong, and a still greater effort to take care of it ; but do right, and it would take care of itself. Then you had nothing to do but to go ahead and do right, and nothing to trouble you. I was acquainted with him a long time, and I never knew him to do a wrong act." Another of his early friends says : "He possessed the judicial quality of mind in a degree so eminent, and it was so universally recognized, that he never could attend a horse-race without being importuned to act as a judge, or witness a bet without assuming the responsibility of a stakeholder." "In the spring or summer of 1832," says Henry McHenry, "I had a horse-race with George Warburton. I got Lincoln, who was there, to be a judge of the race, much against his will, and after hard persuasion. Lincoln decided correctly ; and the other judge said, 'Lincoln is the fairest man I ever had to deal with ; if Lincoln is in this county when I die, I want him to be my administrator, for he is the only man I ever met with who was wholly and unselfishly honest.'"

CHAPTER V.

A TURN IN AFFAIRS.—THE BLACK HAWK WAR.—SCENE IN THE WAR PICTURED BY MR. LINCOLN.—A REMARKABLE MILITARY MANOEUVRE.—GETTING THE COMPANY THROUGH A GATE.—LINCOLN PROTECTING AN INDIAN.—THE POET BRYANT MEETS CAPTAIN LINCOLN.—LINCOLN AND STUART.—LINCOLN AS A PRIVATE SOLDIER.—A MEETING OF NOTABLE MEN.—WRESTLING-MATCHES IN CAMP.—LINCOLN'S MILITARY RECORD.—NOMINATED FOR THE LEGISLATURE.—TRIES STUMP SPEAKING.—QUEER EXPERIENCES.—LINCOLN AS A MERCHANT.—THE DEBATING CLUB.—POSTMASTER AT NEW SALEM.—“ANYTHING HERE FOR ME?”—LINCOLN'S WAY OF KEEPING TRUST FUNDS.

THE spring of 1832 brought a new turn in Lincoln's career. Mr. Offutt's trading enterprises ended disastrously. “The store was shut up, the mill was closed, and Lincoln was out of business. The year had been one of great advances in many respects. He had made new and valuable acquaintances, read many books, mastered the grammar of his own tongue, won multitudes of friends, and become ready for a step still further in advance. Those who could appreciate brains respected him, and those whose highest ideas of a man related to his muscles were devoted to him. Every one trusted him. He was judge, arbitrator, referee, umpire authority in all disputes, games, and matches of man-flesh and horse-flesh; a pacifier in all quarrels; everybody's friend; the best natured, the most sensible, the best informed, the most modest and unassuming, the kindest, gentlest, roughest, strongest, best young fellow in all New Salem and the region round about.”

THE BLACK HAWK WAR.

At the moment when Lincoln found himself adrift once more, Illinois was filled with excitement over the Black Hawk war. The center of alarm was in the Rock River Valley, in the northern part of the State, which had formerly been the home of the Sac tribe of Indians. Discontented

with their life on the reservation west of the Mississippi, to which they had been removed, the Sacs, with several other tribes, resolved to recover their old hunting-grounds. The warlike chief, Black Hawk, was at the head of the revolt, and his march toward the Rock river was signalized by a number of massacres. Governor Reynolds, of Illinois, issued a proclamation calling for volunteers to aid the regular troops in the emergency. Lincoln was one of the first to answer the call, the brave "Clary Grove boys" also coming promptly to the rescue. "The volunteers gathered," writes Mr. Arnold, "at Rushville, in Schuyler county, at which place they were to be organized, and elected officers. Lincoln was a candidate for the place of captain, and in opposition to him was one William Kirkpatrick. The mode of election was novel. By agreement, each candidate walked off to some distance, and took position by himself; the men were then to form, and those who voted for Kirkpatrick to range on a line with their candidate. When the lines were formed, Lincoln's was three times as long as that of Kirkpatrick, and so Lincoln was declared elected. Speaking of this affair when President, he said that he was more gratified with this his first success than with any other election of his life. Neither Lincoln nor his company was in any engagement during the campaign, but there was plenty of hardships and fatigue, and some incidents occurred to illustrate his courage and power over men."

SCENE IN THE BLACK HAWK WAR, AS PICTURED BY MR.
LINCOLN.

Many years afterward,—in fact, while Lincoln was President,—he referred to those early scenes in a way that illustrates his wonderful memory and his power of recalling the minutest incidents of his past life. Meeting an old Illinois friend, he naturally fell to talking of Illinois, and related several stories of his early life in that region. Particularly, he remembered his share in the Black Hawk war, in which he was a captain.

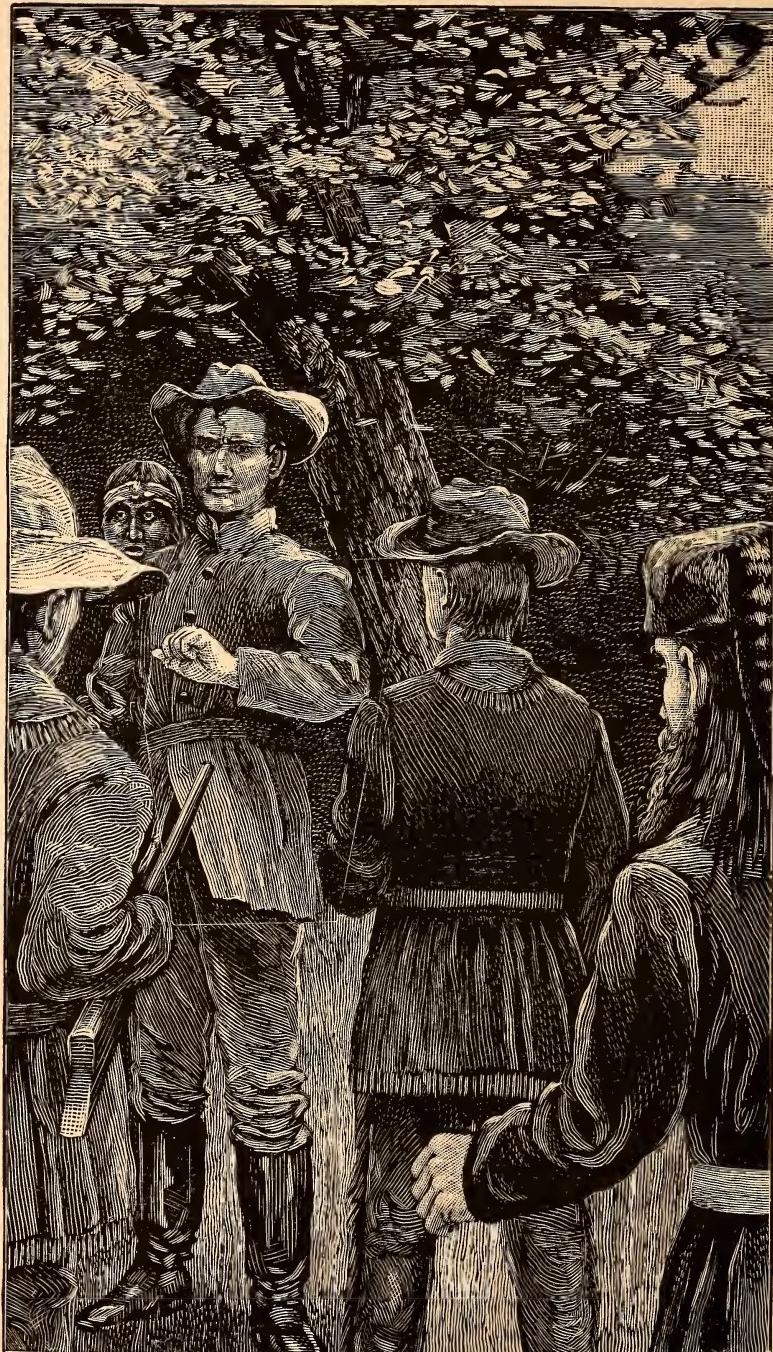
He referred to his part of the campaign lightly, and said that he saw but very little fighting. But he remembered coming on a camp of white scouts one morning just as the sun was rising. The Indians had surprised the camp, and had killed and scalped every man. "I remember just how those men looked," said Lincoln, "as we rode up the little hill where their camp was. The red light of the morning sun was streaming upon them as they lay, heads toward us, on the ground, and every man had a round red spot on the top of his head, about as big as a dollar, where the redskins had taken his scalp. It was frightful, but it was grotesque, and the red sunlight seemed to paint everything all over." Lincoln paused, as if recalling the vivid picture, and added, somewhat irrelevantly, "I remember that one man had buckskin breeches on."

A REMARKABLE MILITARY MANOEUVRE.—GETTING A COMPANY THROUGH A GATE.

Mr. Lincoln also told a good story of his first experience in drilling raw troops during the Black Hawk war. He was crossing a field with a front of twenty men, when he came to a gate through which it was necessary to pass. In describing the incident, he said: "I could not, for the life of me, remember the proper word of command for getting my company *endwise*, so that it could pass through the gate; so, as we came near the gate, I shouted, 'Halt! this company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate.'" The manœuvre was successfully executed.

LINCOLN PROTECTING AN INDIAN.

During this campaign, an incident occurred which well serves to show Lincoln's keen sense of justice, his great common sense, and his resoluteness when aroused. One day there came to the camp an old Indian, footsore and hungry. He was provided with a letter of safe-conduct from General Cass; but there was a feeling of great irritation against the Indians,



SCENE IN THE BLACK HAWK WAR.—CAPTAIN LINCOLN PROTECTING AN
INDIAN CAPTIVE.

and the men objected strongly to receiving him. They pronounced him a spy and his passport a forgery, and were rushing upon the defenseless Indian to kill him, when the tall figure of their captain, Lincoln, suddenly appeared between them and their victim. His men had never seen him so aroused, and they cowed before him. "Men," said he, "this must not be done! He must not be killed by us!" His voice and manner produced an effect on the mob; they paused, listened, and fell back, then sullenly obeyed him, although there were still some murmurs of disappointed rage. At length one man, probably thinking he spoke for the crowd, cried out: "This is cowardly on your part, Lincoln!" Lincoln only gazed with lofty contempt on the men who would have murdered one unarmed Indian, but who quailed before his single hand. "If any man thinks I am a coward," said he, "let him test it." "Lincoln," was the reply, "you are larger and heavier than any of us." "That you can guard against," responded the captain. "Choose your weapons!" The insubordination ended, and the word "coward" was never associated with Lincoln's name again. He afterward said that at this time he felt that his life and character were both at stake, and would probably have been lost had he not at the supreme moment forgotten the officer and asserted the man. His men could hardly have been called soldiers; they were merely armed citizens, with a military organization in name only. Had he ordered them under arrest he would have created a serious mutiny; and to have tried and punished them would have been impossible.

THE POET BRYANT MEETS CAPTAIN LINCOLN.

William Cullen Bryant, the distinguished American poet, made a journey to Illinois in 1832, to visit his brothers—one of whom, Mr. John H. Bryant, is still living (1886) at Princeton, Illinois. While crossing the prairies the poet encountered a company of raw Illinois volunteers, who were going forward to take part in the Black Hawk Indian war. "They were

led by a tall, awkward, uncouth lad, whose appearance particularly attracted Mr. Bryant's attention, and whose conversation delighted him by its raciness and originality, garnished as it probably was by not a few rough frontier jokes. He learned, many years afterward, from a person who had been one of the troop, that this captain of theirs was named Abraham Lincoln."

LINCOLN AND STUART.

It was while Lincoln was a captain that he met for the



MAJOR JOHN T. STUART.

first time Major John T. Stuart, afterwards his law-partner, a gentleman who was destined to have an important influence upon his life. Stuart was already a lawyer by profession, and commanded one of the Sangamon county companies. He was

soon afterwards elected major of a spy battalion, formed from some of these companies. He had the best opportunities to observe the merits of Captain Lincoln, and testifies that Lincoln was exceedingly popular among the soldiers, in consequence of his excellent care of the men in his command, his never-failing good nature, and his ability to tell more stories and better ones than any man in the service. He was popular also among these hardy men on account of his great physical strength. For several years after the Black Hawk war, Mr. Lincoln retained his military title, and was usually addressed as "Captain Lincoln." But this in time was discontinued. Stuart's title of "Major," on the contrary, adhered to him through life; he was best known as "Major Stuart" down to the time of his death, which occurred early in the winter of 1886.

LINCOLN AS A PRIVATE SOLDIER.

The time for which Captain Lincoln's company enlisted soon ran by, but, the trouble with the Indians not being ended, Governor Reynolds called for a second body of volunteers. Lincoln again responded, and was enrolled as a private in the independent company commanded by Elijah Iles of Springfield. A note of this occurrence, made in 1868, by Captain Iles, contains the following statement: "The term of Governor Reynolds' first call being about to expire, he made a second call, and the first was disbanded. I was elected a captain of one of the companies. I had as members of my company, General James D. Henry, John T. Stuart, and A. Lincoln, and we were mustered into service on the 29th of May, 1832, at the mouth of Fox river, now Ottawa, by Lieutenant Robert Anderson, Assistant Inspector General in the United States Army. We reported to Colonel Zachary Taylor, at Dixon's Ferry (on Rock river). Mr. Lincoln remained with the company to the close of the war."

A MEETING OF NOTABLE MEN.

While Mr. Lincoln was a member of Captain Iles' company, there met one day, in camp on Rock river, near the

site of Dixon, Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor, Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, Lieutenant Robert Anderson, and Private Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln and Anderson did not meet again till some time in 1861, after Major Anderson had evacuated Fort Sumter. He then visited Washington, and called at the White House to pay his respects to the President. After having expressed his thanks to Anderson for his conduct in South Carolina, Mr. Lincoln said: "Major, do you remember ever meeting me before?" "No, Mr. President, I have no recollection of ever having had the pleasure before." "My memory is better than yours," said Mr. Lincoln. "You mustered me into the service of the United States, in 1832, at Dixon's Ferry, in the Black Hawk war."

X WRESTLING-MATCHES IN CAMP.

Wrestling was an every-day amusement in Illinois in those days, and was a favorite diversion of the soldiers of the Black Hawk war. Lincoln had, it is said, only one superior in the whole army. His old friend and military comrade, W. G. Greene, relates that one day, while lying in camp near Rock Island, "the boys got up a wrestling match, and pitted Lincoln against a famous athlete and wrestler by the name of Dow Thompson, from Union county, Illinois. We Sangamon county boys believed Mr. Lincoln could throw any one, and the Union county boys knew no one could throw Thompson; so we staked all our slick and well-worn quarters and empty bottles on the wrestle. The first fall was *clearly* in Thompson's favor; the second fall was *rather* in Thompson's favor, but Lincoln's backers claimed that it was what in those days was called a 'dog-fall.' Thompson's backers claimed the stakes, while we demurred; and it really looked for some time as though there would be at least a hundred fights as the result. Mr. Lincoln, after getting up and brushing the dust and dirt off his jeans pants, said: 'Boys, give up your bets; if he has not thrown me fairly, he could.' Every bet was at once surrendered, and peace and order were restored in a min-

ute. During the Rebellion, in 1864, I had occasion to see Mr. Lincoln in his office at Washington, and after having recalled many of our early recollections, he said: ‘Bill, what ever became of our old antagonist, Thompson, that big curly-headed fellow who threw me at Rock Island?’ I replied I did not know, and wondered why he asked. He playfully remarked that if he knew where he was living he would give him a post-office, by way of showing him that he bore him no ill-will.’

LINCOLN’S MILITARY RECORD.

Mr. Lincoln displayed the same courage and fidelity in performing the duties of a soldier that had marked his conduct in all other relations of life. Father Dixon, the guide, who was attached to Captain Iles’ company of mounted rangers, remarks that in their marches, when scouts were sent forward to examine thickets and ravines where the enemy might be lurking, it often became necessary for many of the men to dismount and attend to their riding-gear. When Lincoln was detailed for such service, his “saddle was always in order.” During the contest between General Lewis Cass and General Zachary Taylor for the Presidency, in the year 1848, Mr. Lincoln, in the course of a speech in Congress, referred to his services in the Black Hawk war with characteristic humor. “By the way, Mr. Speaker,” said he, “did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk war I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass’ career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman’s defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull’s surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterwards. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent my musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation. I bent my musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me in picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon the wild onions. If he saw any live

fighting Indians, it was more than I did ; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes, and, although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry. Mr. Speaker, if I should ever conclude to doff whatever our Democratic friends may suppose there is of black cockade federalism about me, and thereupon they shall take me up as their candidate for the Presidency, I protest they shall not make fun of me as they have of General Cass, by attempting to write me into a military hero."

NOMINATED FOR THE LEGISLATURE.—TRIES STUMP
SPEAKING.—QUEER EXPERIENCES.

Lincoln's popularity among his comrades in the field was so great that at the close of his military service, which had lasted three months, he was nominated as a candidate for the State Legislature. "His first appearance on the stump, in the course of the canvass, was at Pappsville, about eleven miles west of Springfield, upon the occasion of a public sale. The sale over, speech-making was about to begin, when Mr. Lincoln observed strong symptoms of inattention in his audience, who had taken that particular moment to engage in a general fight. Lincoln saw that one of his friends was suffering more than he liked, and, stepping into the crowd, he shouldered them sternly away from his man, until he met a fellow who refused to fall back ; him he seized by the nape of the neck and the seat of his breeches, and tossed him 'ten or twelve feet easily.' After this episode—as characteristic of him as of the times—he mounted the platform, and delivered, with awkward modesty, the following speech : 'Gentlemen and Fellow-Citizens, I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal-improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my

sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful ; if not, it will be all the same.' ” His friend, Mr. A. Y. Ellis, who was with him during a part of this campaign, says : “ He wore a mixed-jeans coat, claw-hammer style, short in the sleeves, and bobtail—in fact, it was so short in the tail he could not sit on it—flax and tow linen pantaloons, and a straw hat. I think he wore a vest, but do not remember how it looked. He wore pot-metal boots. I accompanied him on one of his electioneering trips to Island Grove ; and he made a speech which pleased his party friends very well indeed, though some of the Jackson men tried to make sport of it. He told several anecdotes in his speech, and applied them, as I thought, very well.”

The election took place in August ; and though Lincoln was defeated, he received 277 votes of the 284 cast in his precincts. He was so little known outside of New Salem that the chances of election were hopelessly against him, yet the extraordinary evidence of favor shown by the vote of his fellow-townsman was a flattering success in the midst of defeat. It is perhaps to the history of this election that the following anecdote, told by Mr. Ellis, belongs : “ I remember once seeing Mr. Lincoln out of temper and laughing at the same time. It was at New Salem. The boys were having a jollification after an election. They had a large fire made of shavings and hempstalks ; and some of the boys made a bet with a fellow that I shall call ‘ Ike ’ that he couldn’t run his little bob-tail pony through the fire. Ike took the bet, and trotted his pony back about one hundred yards to ‘ give him a good start,’ as he said. The boys all formed a line on either side to make way for Ike and his pony. Presently Ike came, full tilt, with his hat off ; and just as he reached the blazing fire, Ike raised in his saddle for the jump straight ahead ; but the pony was not of the same mind, so he flew the track, and pitched poor Ike into the devouring element. Mr. Lincoln saw it, and ran to his assistance, saying : ‘ You have carried



this thing far enough !' I could see he was mad, though he could not help laughing himself. The poor fellow was considerably scorched about the head and face. Jack Armstrong took him to the doctor, who shaved his head to fix him up, and put salve on the burn. I think Mr. Lincoln was a little mad at Armstrong, and Jack himself was very sorry for it. Jack gave Ike next morning a dram, his breakfast, and a seal-skin cap, and sent him home."

LINCOLN AS A MERCHANT.

Lincoln was once more without occupation, and, as Dr. Holland declares, "seriously took into consideration the project of learning the blacksmith's trade. He was without means, and felt the immediate necessity of undertaking some business that would give him bread. It was while he was entertaining this project that an event occurred, which, in his undetermined state of mind, seemed to open a way to success in another quarter." The particulars of the event referred to are given by one closely concerned therein, Mr. W. G. Greene. "A man named Reuben Radford," says Mr. Greene, "was the keeper of a small store in the village of New Salem. A friend told him to look out for the 'Clary Grove boys,' or they would smash him up. He said he was not afraid. He was a great big fellow. But his friend said, 'They don't come alone. If one can't whip you, two or three can, and they'll do it.' One day he left his store in charge of his brother, with injunctions that if the 'Clary Grove boys' came, not to let them have more than two drinks. All the stores in those days kept liquor to sell, and had a corner for drinking. The store was nicely fitted up, and had many things in glass jars nicely labeled. The Clary Grove boys came, and took two drinks. The clerk refused them any more, as politely as he could. Then they went behind the counter and helped themselves. They got roaring drunk, and went to work smashing everything in the store. The fragments on the floor were an inch deep. They left, and went off on their horses, whooping

and yelling. Coming across the herds of cattle, they took off the bells from their necks and fastened them to the tails of the leaders and chased them over the country yelling like mad. Radford heard them, and, mounting, rode in hot haste to the store. "I had been sent that morning with a grist to Lincoln's mill. It was at the dam, and I had to pass the store. I saw Radford ride up. His horse was in a lather of foam. He dismounted, and looked in on the wreck through the open door. He was aghast at the spectacle, and said, 'I'll sell out this thing to the next man that comes along!' I rode up, and looking through the window that had been smashed, said: 'I'll give you four hundred dollars for it.' 'Done!' said he. I said, 'But I have no money. I must have time.' 'How much?' 'Six months.' 'Agreed.' He drew up a note for \$400 at six months, and I signed it. I began to think I was stuck. The boys came in, among them Lincoln. 'Cheer up, Billy,' said he. 'It's a good thing. We'll take an inventory.' 'No more inventories for me,' said I, not knowing what he meant. He explained that we should take an account of stock to see what was left. We found it amounted to about \$1,200. Lincoln and Berry consulted over it, and offered me \$250 for my bargain. I accepted, stipulating that they should assume my notes. Berry was a wild fellow, a gambler. He had a fine horse and splendid saddle and bridle. He turned over the horse as part pay. Lincoln let Berry run the store, and it soon ran out. I had to pay the note. Lincoln said he would pay it some day. We used to talk about it as the 'National debt.' Finally he paid it, with interest."

THE DEBATING CLUB.

Mr. Lincoln's ambition to fit himself for public speaking has been demonstrated in a number of anecdotes in the preceding narrative. Even at this early date the settlers in New Salem were infected with the national desire to take part in the general march of intellectual improvements, and to aid in their object they had established a club entitled the New

Salem Literary Society. Before this association the studious Lincoln was invited to speak. Mr. R. B. Rutledge, the brother of Anne Rutledge, says of the event: "About the year 1832 or 1833, Mr. Lincoln made his first effort at public speaking. A debating club, of which James Rutledge was president, was organized, and held regular meetings. As Lincoln arose to speak, his tall form towered above the little assembly. Both hands were thrust down deep in the pockets of his pantaloons. A perceptible smile at once lit up the faces of the audience, for all anticipated the relation of some humorous story. But he opened up the discussion in splendid style, to the infinite astonishment of his friends. As he warmed with his subject, his hands would forsake his pockets and would enforce his ideas by awkward gestures, but would very soon seek their easy resting-places. He pursued the question with reason and argument so pithy and forcible that all were amazed. The president, after the meeting, remarked to his wife that there was more in Abe's head than wit and fun; that he was already a fine speaker; that all he lacked was culture to enable him to reach the high destiny which he knew was in store for him."

POSTMASTER AT NEW SALEM.

On the 7th of May, 1833, Mr. Lincoln was appointed postmaster at New Salem by President Jackson. The duties of the position were light, there being only a weekly mail, and the remuneration was correspondingly small. "The office was too insignificant to be considered politically, and it was given to the young man because everybody liked him, and because he was the only man willing to take it who could make out the returns. He was exceedingly pleased with the appointment, because it gave him a chance to read every newspaper that was taken in the vicinity. He had never been able to get half the newspapers he wanted, and the office gave him the prospect of a constant feast. Not wishing to be tied to the office, as it yielded him no revenue that would re-

ward him for the confinement, he made a post-office of his hat. Whenever he went out, the letters were placed in his hat. When an anxious looker for a letter found the postmaster, he had found his office; and the public officer, taking off his hat, looked over his mail wherever the public might find him. He kept the office until it was discontinued, or removed to Petersburg."

"ANYTHING HERE FOR ME?"

The incumbent of every public office is subject to annoyances, as Mr. Lincoln learned while dealing out letters to the few correspondents dwelling at New Salem. An anecdote in illustration is furnished by Mr. Hill: "One Elmore Johnson, an ignorant but ostentatious, proud man, used to go to Lincoln's post-office every day—sometimes three or four times a day, if in town—and inquire: 'Anything here for me?' This bored Lincoln, yet it amused him. Lincoln fixed a plan—wrote a letter to Johnson as coming from a negress in Kentucky, saying many funny things about opossums, dances, corn-shuckings, etc.: 'John's! come and see me; and old master won't kick you out of the kitchen any more!' Elmore took the letter; opened it; couldn't read a word; pretended to read it; went away; got some friends to read it; they read it correctly; he thought the reader was fooling him, and went to others with the same result. At last he said he would get Lincoln to read it, and presented it to Lincoln. It was almost too much for Lincoln, but he read it. The man never asked afterwards, 'Anything here for me?'"

LINCOLN'S WAY OF KEEPING TRUST FUNDS.

A balance due the government remained in the hands of Mr. Lincoln at the discontinuance of the office. Time passed on, and he had removed to Springfield and was practicing law, having his place of business in Dr. Henry's office. Meanwhile his struggle with poverty was unabated, and he had often been obliged to borrow money from his friends to purchase the

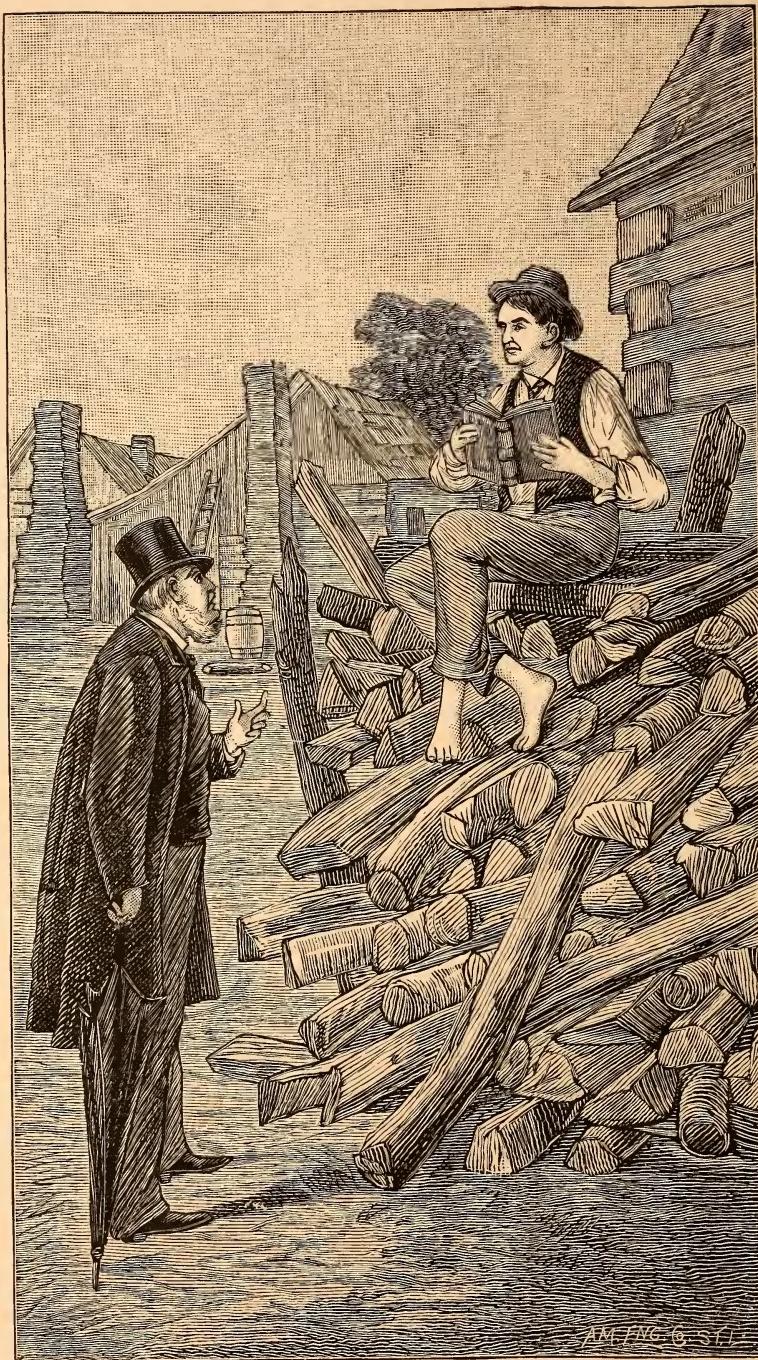
barest necessities. It was at this juncture that the agent of the United States called for a settlement of his post-office accounts. The interview took place in the presence of Dr. Henry, who thus describes it: "I did not believe he had the money on hand to meet the draft, and I was about to call him aside and loan him the money, when he asked the agent to be seated a moment, while he went over to his trunk at his boarding-house, and returned with an old blue sock with a quantity of silver and copper coin tied up in it. Untying the sock, he poured the contents on the table and proceeded to count the coin, which consisted of such silver and copper pieces as the country people were then in the habit of using in paying postage. On counting it up, there was found the exact amount of the draft to a cent, and in the identical coin which had been received. He never used, under any circumstances, trust funds."



CHAPTER VI.

LINCOLN STUDIES LAW.—LAWYER, SURVEYOR, AND STOREKEEPER.—FISHING AND QUOTING POETRY.—ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE.—BEGINNING SLOWLY AS A LEGISLATOR.—PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AT THIS PERIOD.—THE ROMANCE OF LINCOLN'S LIFE.—ANNE RUTLEDGE.—THE CLOSE OF YOUTH.—NEW SALEM REVISITED.—A DESERTED VILLAGE.

Mr. Lincoln began studying law sometime in 1832, using an old copy of "Blackstone's Commentaries" which he had bought at auction in Springfield. This book was soon mastered, and then the young man looked about him for more. His friend, John T. Stuart, had a considerable law library for those days, and to him Lincoln applied in his extremity. The library was placed at his disposal, and thenceforth he was engrossed in the acquisition of its contents. But the books were in Springfield, where their owner resided; and New Salem was some fourteen miles distant. This proved no obstacle in the way of Lincoln, who made nothing of the walk back and forth in the pursuit of his purpose. Mr. Stuart's partner, Mr. H. C. Dummer, took note of the youth in his frequent visits to the office, and declares: "He was an uncouth looking lad; did not say much, but what he did say he said straight and sharp." "He used to read law," says Henry McHenry, "in 1832 or 1833, barefooted, seated in the shade of a tree, and would grind around with the shade, just opposite Berry's grocery store, and a few feet south of the door. He occasionally varied the attitude by lying flat on his back, and putting his feet up the tree," a situation which might have been unfavorable to mental application in the case of a man with shorter extremities. "The first time I ever saw Abe with a law-book in his hand," says Squire Godbey, "he was sitting astride Jake Bates' woodpile in New Salem. Says I, 'Abe, what are you studying?' 'Law,' says Abe. 'Good God Almighty!' responded I." It was too much for Godbey; he could not sup-



"WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING, ABE?" "LAW." "GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY!"

press the exclamation of surprise at seeing such a figure acquiring learning in such an odd situation. Mr. Arnold states that Lincoln made a practice of reading in his walks between Springfield and New Salem ; and so intense was his application, and so absorbed was he in his study, that he would pass his best friends without observing them, and some people said that Lincoln was going crazy with hard study. He very soon began to make a practical application of his knowledge. He bought an old form-book, and began to draw up contracts, deeds, leases, mortgages, and all sorts of legal instruments for his neighbors. He also began to exercise his forensic ability in trying small cases before justices of the peace and juries, and he soon acquired a local reputation as a speaker, which gave him considerable practice. But he was able in this way to earn scarcely money enough for his maintenance.

LAWYER, SURVEYOR, AND STOREKEEPER.

To add to his means, he again took up the study of surveying, and soon became, like Washington, a skillful and accurate surveyor. John Calhoun, an intelligent and courteous gentleman, was at that time surveyor of the county of Sangamon. He became interested in Lincoln, and appointed him his deputy. His work was so accurate, and the settlers had such confidence in him, that he was much sought after, to survey, fix, and mark the boundaries of farms, and to plot and lay off the town of Petersburg. His accuracy must have been attained with some difficulty ; for the old settlers who survive say that when he began to survey, his chain was a grape-vine. He did not speculate in the land he surveyed. Had he done so, the rapid advance in the value of real estate would have made it easy for him to make good investments. But he was not in the least like one of his appointees when President—a surveyor-general of a western territory, who bought up much of the best land, and to whom the President said : “I am told, sir, you are *monarch of all you survey.*”



An old friend of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Ellis, says of this period (1833): "I kept a store at New Salem, and boarded at the same log-tavern where Lincoln was. Lincoln, being engaged in no particular business, merely endeavoring to make a lawyer, a surveyor, and a politician of himself, used to assist me in the store on busy days; but he always disliked to wait on the ladies; he preferred trading with the men and boys, as he used to say. I also remember that he used to sleep on the counter, when they had too much company at the tavern. I well remember how he was dressed; he wore flax and tow linen pantaloons—I thought about five inches too short in the legs,—and frequently he had but one suspender; no vest or coat. He wore a calico shirt, such as he had in the Black Hawk war; coarse brogans, tan color; blue yarn socks, and straw hat, without a band. Mr. Lincoln was in those days very shy of ladies. On one occasion, while we boarded at this tavern, there came a family, containing an old lady and her son and three stylish daughters, from the State of Virginia, and stopped there for two or three weeks; and during their stay I do not remember Mr. Lincoln eating once at the same table where they did."

FISHING AND QUOTING POETRY.

"There lived at New Salem at this time," continues Mr. Ellis, "a festive gentleman named Kelso, a school-teacher, a merchant, or a vagabond, according to the run of his somewhat variable luck. When other people got drunk at New Salem, it was the usual custom to tussle and fight, and trample each other's toes, and pull each other's noses; but when Kelso got drunk he astonished the rustic community with copious quotations from Robert Burns and William Shakespeare—authors but little known to fame among the literary men of New Salem. Besides Shakespeare and Burns, Mr. Kelso was likewise very fond of fishing, and could catch his game 'when no other man could get a bite.' Mr. Lincoln hated fishing with all his heart. But it is the testimony of

the country-side, from Petersburg to Island Grove, that Kelso ‘drew Lincoln after him by his talk;’ that they became exceedingly intimate; that they loitered away whole days together along the banks of the quiet streams; that Lincoln learned to love inordinately our ‘divine William’ and ‘Scotia’s Bard,’ whom his friend mouthed in his cups, or expounded more soberly in his intervals of fixing bait and dropping line. Finally, he and Kelso boarded at the same place; and with another ‘merchant,’ named Sincho, of tastes congenial and wits as keen as Kelso’s, they were ‘always found together, battling and arguing.’ ”

ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE.

The nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the State Legislature, on his return from the Black Hawk war, was premature. The people of New Salem had voted for him almost to a man; but his acquaintance had not then extended far enough into the district round about to insure his election. In the campaign of 1834 the choice of a candidate fell again upon him, and this time there was a favorable prospect of success. Mr. Lincoln entered into the contest with intense earnestness, using every legitimate means to secure victory. Mr. Herndon relates in his reminiscences: “He (Lincoln) came to my house, near Island Grove, during harvest. There were some thirty men in the field. He got his dinner, and went out in the field where the men were at work. I gave him an introduction, and the boys said they could not vote for a man unless he could ‘make a hand.’ ‘Well, boys,’ said he, if that is all, I am sure of your votes.’ He took hold of the cradle, and led the way all the round, with perfect ease. The boys were satisfied, and I don’t think he lost a vote in the crowd. The next day there was speaking at Berlin. He went from my house with Dr. Barnett, the man that had asked me who this man Lincoln was. I told him that he was a candidate for the Legislature. He laughed, and said, ‘Can’t



the party raise better material than that?" I said, "Go, tomorrow, and hear all, before you pronounce judgment." When he came back, I said: "Doctor, what say you now?" "Why, sir," said he, "he is a perfect *take-in*; he knows more than all of them put together."

BEGINNING SLOWLY AS A LEGISLATOR.

The result of the election was that Mr. Lincoln was chosen to represent the Sangamon district. When the Legislature convened at the opening session, he was in his place in the lower house; but he bore himself quietly in his new position. He had much to learn in his novel situation as one of the law-makers of the State, and as a co-worker with an assembly comprising the most talented and prominent men gathered from all parts of Illinois. He was keenly watchful of the proceedings of the house, weighing every measure, as we may believe, with scrutinizing sagacity, but, except in the announcement of his vote, his voice was seldom heard. At the previous session, Mr. G. S. Hubbard, afterwards a well-known citizen of Chicago, had exerted himself to procure an act for the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. His effort was defeated, but he continued, as a lobbyist, to push the measure during several winters, until it was finally adopted. Mr. Lincoln lent him efficient aid in the accomplishment of his object. "Indeed," remarks Mr. Hubbard, "I very much doubt if the bill could have passed as easily as it did without his valuable help."

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AT THIS PERIOD.

"We were thrown much together," continues Mr. Hubbard, "our intimacy increasing. I never had a friend to whom I was more warmly attached. His character was almost faultless. Possessing a warm and generous heart, genial, affable, honest, courteous to his opponents, persevering, industrious in research; never losing sight of the principal point under discussion; aptly illustrating by his stories, always

brought into good effect; free from political trickery or denunciation of the private character of his opponents; in debate firm and collected; ‘with charity towards all, with malice towards none,’ he won the confidence of the public, even of his political opponents.”

General U. F. Linder, a noted lawyer of Illinois, who first met Lincoln at this period, says he impressed him as “a very modest and retiring man. He had not then been admitted to the bar, although he had some celebrity, having been a captain in the Black Hawk campaign, and had just finished a term in the Illinois Legislature; but he won no special fame at that session. If Lincoln at this time felt the ‘divine afflatus’ of greatness stir within him, I have never heard of it. It was rather common then to suppose that there was no presidential timber growing in the Northwest; yet we doubtless had at that time the stuff out of which to make half a dozen Presidents.”

THE ROMANCE OF LINCOLN’S LIFE.—HIS LOVE FOR
ANNE RUTLEDGE.

Among the reminiscences of Lincoln’s boyhood and youth, there is no hint of tender relations with any individual of the opposite sex, until he met Anne Rutledge. The romance which connects her name with his had a brief existence, but it is believed by many that its memory threw a melancholy shadow over his whole life. The father of Anne, James Rutledge, was a descendant of the eminent Rutledge family of North Carolina. His daughter Anne was about nineteen years old when Lincoln was thrown into her company, shortly after the episode of the Black Hawk war. She was described by those who knew her as “a winsome maiden, with a blonde complexion, golden hair, cherry-red lips, and a bonny blue eye.” The heart of Lincoln was captivated by her sweet looks and gentle manners, and though she had other admirers—one, indeed, to whom, if the story be true, she had plighted her girlish affections—she accepted the love of this last ardent suitor. They were betrothed, and the marriage was to take

place as soon as Lincoln should finish his law studies. But in August, 1835, the grass was growing over the mound where she lay buried. An old neighbor who saw Lincoln immediately after his parting interview with the dying girl, says there were "signs of the most terrible distress in his face and conduct." After Anne's death "his grief became frantic; he lost all self-control, even the consciousness of identity, and every friend he had in New Salem pronounced him insane, mad, crazy. 'He was watched with especial vigilance,' as William Greene tells us, 'during storms, fogs, damp, gloomy weather, for fear of an accident.' At such times he raved piteously, declaring, among other wild expressions of his woe, 'I can never be reconciled to have the snow, rains, and storms beating upon her grave!' About three-quarters of a mile below New Salem, at the foot of the main bluff, and in a hollow between two lateral bluffs, stood the house of Bowlin Greene, built of logs and weather-boarded. Thither the friends of Lincoln, who feared a total loss of reason, determined to transport him, partly for the benefit of a mere change of scene, and partly to keep him within constant reach of his near and noble friend, Bowlin Greene. During this period of his darkened and wavering intellect, when 'accidents' were momentarily expected, it was discovered that Bowlin Greene possessed a power to persuade and guide him proportioned to the affection that had subsisted between them in former and better times. Bowlin Greene came for him, but Lincoln was cunning and obstinate; it required the most artful general conspiracy of all his friends to 'disarm his suspicions,' and induce him to go and stay with his most anxious and devoted friend. But at last they succeeded; and Lincoln remained down under the bluff for two or three weeks, the object of undisguised solicitude and of the strictest surveillance. At the end of that time his mind seemed to be restored, and it was thought safe to let him go back to his old haunts,—to the study of law, to the writing of legal papers for

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